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Drinker, Henry Sturgis

Address

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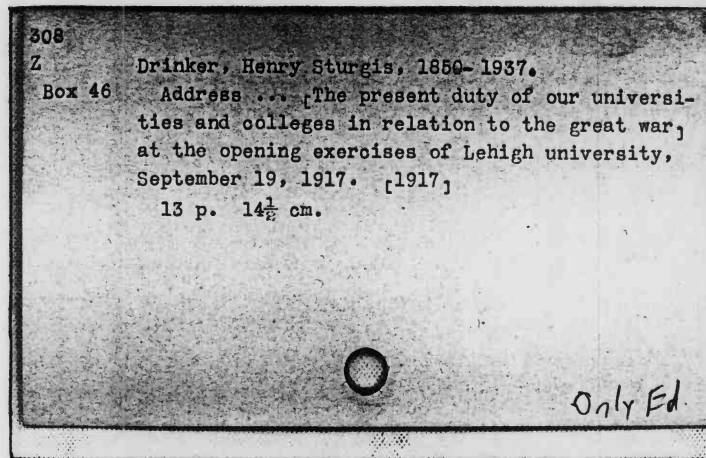
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Gift of the President

ADDRESS OF
PRESIDENT HENRY STURGIS DRINKER
at the
OPENING EXERCISES
of
LEHIGH UNIVERSITY
September 19, 1917

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Box 46

Nov. 17, 1917 AET

The Present Duty of Our Universities and Colleges in Relation to the Great War.

In coming together again to pursue our university work, the overshadowing thought is, of course, with us all, the national one. What is the duty of our university, and the duty of us all, individually, trustees, faculty and teaching force, students and alumni, in the present crisis in the affairs of the nation and of the world? Lehigh has a right to feel she did not slumber in the recent years preceding the entry of our country into the great war. We were among the very first of the universities and colleges of our land to respond actively and heartily in 1913 to the call of the War Department, voiced through Major General Leonard Wood, then chief of staff, to join in the preparedness movement by establishing military training camps in the Summer vacations for the training of our college men in mili-

tary science and tactics, and we sent from Lehigh a delegation to the first camp held at Gettysburg in the Summer of 1913. The establishment of these camps over one whole year before the outbreak in August, 1914, of the great war into which our nation has been drawn, was due to the prevision and patriotism of General Wood. I still have a copy of the first circular proposing the camps issued by the War Department over his signature, dated May 10, 1913, and sent to the presidents of all our universities and colleges. In announcing the camps, General Wood said:

"The object of these camps is, primarily, to increase the present inadequate personnel of the trained military reserve of the United States by a class of men from whom, in time of a national emergency, a large proportion of the commissioned officers will probably be drawn, and upon whose military judgment at such a time the lives of many other men will, in a measure, depend."

How well founded was this anticipation of the value of the training camps is shown by the fact that through their establishment in 1913, and their growth during the years 1914, 1915 and 1916, over 20,000 men were trained and made ready for national service as officers, and

of these a large proportion enrolled this year in the Officers' Reserve and are now in active service. Among them we note with pride many of our alumni.

We received here from President Wilson in September, 1913, a letter expressing his appreciation of the encouragement and assistance that Lehigh gave to the establishment of the first training camps.

The students attending the camps of 1913 formed a permanent organization, "The Society of the National Reserve Corps of the United States," and elected the president of Lehigh president of the society.

This organization was merged in 1916 with the similar organization formed by the business and professional men who attended the Plattsburg and other senior camps in 1915, and the president of Lehigh was elected chairman of the Governing Committee of the joint present organization, "The Military Training Camps' Association," and still holds that position. This association has been active in supporting before Congress the call for legislation to enforce universal compulsory military training, and during the past Spring it placed at the service of the Government its organization and offices throughout the country for the enrollment of the men attending the first Reserve Officers' training camps.

Lehigh University, at the outbreak of the war, tendered to the President the facilities of the university and the services of the university staff, which were accepted. We have just received from the Surgeon General's office (from the Food Department) a request for space in our chemical laboratories to enable the department to make certain analyses in connection with food supplies and garbage at the camps, matters of importance relating to the nutritional care of our soldiers.

Now as to Lehigh's present attitude toward the promotion of active military service in the war.

By joint action of the trustees and faculty, Lehigh University decided last Spring to introduce military training as a part of its regular courses, to be obligatory on all students and to be carried on under the provision of the General Orders of the War Department No. 49, dated Sept. 20, 1916, whenever the War Department could detail and furnish an officer or officers competent to take charge of a course in military science and tactics leading to a commission in the Officers' Reserve.

By the Act of Congress of June 3, 1916, the President was authorized to detail officers for duty as professors and assistant professors of military science and tactics, with the limitation that "no active officer

shall be so detailed who has not had five years' commissioned service in the army."

But in the present war strain the War Department has no officers competent to take such a position that it can spare from active service. Practically all available officers, from the active or retired lists, competent to render such service, are now needed for active war service. During the Summer I conferred with the Secretary of War, with the Adjutant General, and with officers of the General Staff, and they have not been able to aid us, and I have corresponded with our good friend General Wood. It is the opinion of our trustees and faculty, as voiced in the report of the Faculty Committee, which recommended the introduction of military training as a course, that if the training cannot be given with the thoroughness that its importance demands it is best not to attempt it in part only.

We have never played at Lehigh with courses of instruction, and we do not propose to introduce any partial or inadequate military course. Until it can be done with thoroughness and efficiency its introduction is best delayed.

Mere exercise in military drill is not military education, and such exercise, in the opinion of competent judges, in the intensive training

given at the camps, accomplishes more in a few weeks than is possible in a few hours of drill weekly, extended over the scholastic year.

But Lehigh has served and is playing a distinct and important part in national service in her technical training of men in engineering and in business to take up and carry on the work for trained men so important and needful at this time. There is today an unprecedented demand for such men, and our national leaders are urging this truth on the young men of the nation. Note the following expressions of opinion from those who are charged with the responsibility of leading the policy and action of the nation at this time:

President Wilson: "There will be need for a larger number of persons expert in the various fields of applied science than ever before. Such persons will be needed both during the war and after its close. * * * I would particularly urge upon the young people who are leaving our high schools that as many of them as can do so avail themselves this year of the opportunities offered by the colleges and technical schools, to the end that the country may not lack an adequate supply of trained men and women."

Secretary of War Baker: "Let the

young men of America devote themselves to the various branches of engineering education, so that when this war is over the call will not be in vain to young men who have had the training and have learned the lessons necessary to enable them quickly and rapidly to play a part in that great reconstruction enterprise."

General William N. Black, Chief of Engineers, United States Army: "This cataclysm of war must not be allowed to disorganize our structure for all time, and one of the things we will need after the war, just as we have needed it before the war, just as we are needing it today, will be trained young men to take the place of the older who go out."

Major General Leonard Wood: "Boys should remember that they are now serving in the best possible way by preparing themselves to serve more efficiently when the time comes. * * * It is a great mistake for partly educated young boys to rush to the colors now. We don't need them. It is very important that they should finish their education."

Colonel S. E. Tillman, Superintendent West Point Military Academy: "Only the most urgent conditions should withdraw any boy from school. In justice to the Government as well as to themselves they should finish their courses."

I read in a newspaper some days ago a statement to the effect that one of our great universities had announced changes in its courses looking to devoting a considerable portion of its energies during the coming year to the preparation of students for national service. It is a matter of just pride to us at Lehigh that our courses have been so modelled for service in the past and in their growth that we respond readily to the call voiced by the above statements of the President and of the other men, eminent in national leadership, who have spoken. A statement responsive to this call from our national leaders has been issued by about forty of the leading engineering schools of the country, in which call our university has joined, emphasizing the present national need of training our young men to be ready to take active and efficient part in patriotic work behind the trenches to supply the needs of the men at the front, and to take part in the reconstruction of devastated Europe, and mayhap of our own land after the war. War is not fought only at the front. Products of our factories, farms and mines, raw materials and finished products, will be needed in enormous quantities. Vast parts of Europe are in ruins. Our own railroads and industrial equipments will need rebuilding after the terrible strain of war time. Yet the supply of

technically trained men does not meet the demand now. When the war is over the demand will be still greater.

Our young men, full of patriotic enthusiasm, desirous of serving the nation in this, its time of need, should consider where their service can best be given to render the best effect.

As the President said in his proclamation of May 18th last relative to the putting into operation of the law for selective compulsory service:

"In the sense in which we have been wont to think of armies, there are no armies in this struggle, there are entire nations armed. Thus, the men who remain to till the soil and man the factories, are no less a part of the army that is France than the men beneath the battle flags. It must be so with us. It is not an army that we must shape and train for war; it is a nation. To this end our people must draw close in one compact front against a common foe. But this cannot be if each man pursues a private purpose. All must pursue one purpose. The nation needs all men; but it needs each man, not in the field that will most pleasure him, but in the endeavor that will best serve the common good. Thus, though a sharpshooter pleases to operate a trip-hammer for the forging of great guns, and an expert machinist desires to march with the flag, the nation is being served only when the sharp-

shooter marches and the machinist remains at his levers. The whole nation must be a team in which each man shall play the part for which he is best fitted. To this end Congress has provided that the nation shall be organized for war by selection; that each man shall be classified for service in the place to which it shall best serve the general good to call him."

This is the President's summary of our duty and it could not be better expressed.

He is urgent that our universities and colleges go on and perform their part in training men, and he and the Secretary of War have been emphatic in their expressed approval of the continuance of athletic training and sport.

In his address on Aug. 2d before the National Collegiate Athletic Association Secretary Baker emphasized the view that athletics in an institution should be developed so as to reach the greatest possible number of men. This idea has drawn forth widespread expressions of approval and Lehigh may be proud of the fact that years ago, by joint action of the faculty and student body, we adopted the system of compulsory athletic training for the entire student body.

Thus you men may take to your hearts the satisfaction of feeling that in pursuing your training in college for business and for engineering, you

have the highest authority for feeling that you are serving the national need—a need as great as that now calling men to the military front, and that on you and those like you, may, and without doubt, will rest the duty and privilege of carrying out a great national and world service in placing at the call of the nation the training you are receiving as students when it has been completed. It is well to remember this, to remember that the call to the colors does not mean necessarily to step out to follow the flag to battle—that the service that as trained men you can hereafter render will be of infinitely more value than any service that you can render now, if moved by patriotic impulse or emotion you drop your training for professional work and enter the ranks to do work that others less trained can do as well or better. Let us ever bear in mind the President's above words that "the whole nation must be a team, in which each man shall play the part for which he is best fitted," and that the nation needs each man, "not in the field that will most please him, but in the endeavor that will best serve the common good."

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